DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 481 984 EA 032 840

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TITLE	Implementing New Accreditation Standards: One Program's Experience.
PUB DATE	2003-04-00
NOTE	11p.; Paper presented at the Arkansas Association of Colleges for Teacher Education/Association of Teacher Educators Spring Conference (Searcy, AR, April 10-11, 2003).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Standards; *Accreditation (Institutions); Accrediting Agencies; *Administrator Education; Administrator Qualifications; *College Outcomes Assessment; *Education Courses; Education Majors; *Educational Administration; Educational Assessment; Higher Education; Institutional Evaluation; Instructional Leadership; Management Development; Quality Control; School Administration
IDENTIFIERS	Arkansas; Educational Leadership; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educ; National Policy Board for Educ Administration

ABSTRACT

Colleges of education in Arkansas are required to obtain accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). This group refers the accreditation requirements to the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA). One of the NPBEA responsibilities is that of establishing structure and maintaining quality of leadership preparation programs. The NPBEA assigns the specific responsibility of determining the standards and requirements to be included in an educational administration program to the Educational Leadership Constituent Council. In January 2003, the council revised the standards and the required reporting process. This revised system of accreditation requires institutions preparing educational administrators to make candidate performance the foundation of the learning experience. This transition takes the focus from just the teaching act to the effects of teaching on student learning, including knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Departments of educational administration at colleges and universities seeking NCATE accreditation must now meet the revised standards as part of their institutional review. This paper describes one program's experience with this process and offers suggestions to others approaching the task. (Author)

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Running Head: Implementing New Accreditation Standards

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Implementing New Accreditation Standards: One Program's Experience

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ArACTE/ATE Spring Conference
Harding University
Searcy, Arkansas
April 10-11, 2003

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Abstract

Colleges of Education in Arkansas are required to obtain accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). This group refers the accreditation requirements to the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) which is a governing board of the thirteen professional education organizations. One of the NPBEA responsibilities is that of establishing structure and maintaining quality of leadership preparation programs. The NPBEA assigns the specific responsibility of determining the standards and requirements to be included in an educational administration program to the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) representing four national associations encompassing building administrators, district administrators, and district curriculum and program directors. In January 2003, the Council revised the standards and the required reporting process. This revised system of accreditation requires institutions preparing educational administrators to make candidate performance the foundation of the learning experience. This transition takes the focus from just the teaching act to the effects of teaching on student learning to include knowledge, skills, and dispositions. As reported in the new instruction document of the NPBEA, "Programs will now be assessed on how well graduates are prepared to perform in the workplace rather than on the number of courses offered or on objectives listed in the syllabus" (Schneider, 2002, p. 6). Departments of educational administration at colleges and universities seeking NCATE accreditation must now meet the revised standards as part of their institutional review (Schneider, 2002). This session will describe one program's experience with this process and offer suggestions to others approaching this task.

Introduction

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) has been responsible for conducting accreditation audits for programs in educational administration for the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. In January 2002, the NPBEA (2002) approved standards for building-level and district-level administrator preparation programs. In its regular five-year revision of the NCATE guidelines during the fall of 2000, a writing group of representatives from NPBEA members (American Association of School Administrators [AASA], the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD], the National Association of Elementary School Principals [NAESP], and the National Association of Secondary School Principals [NASSP]) met with the charge to integrate the NCATE 2000 assessment, the ELCC standards and the ISLLC standards into one document. The new document was also revised to include standards for doctoral level programs (NPBEA, 2002).

Background

Preparation of school and district leadership is at a new level of scrutiny. Policymakers at the state and federal levels are focusing attention on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required of today's educational administrators. The changing landscape of public school governance has created different demands on how the nation's school leaders are prepared. Schools must now adapt to new structures and ways of responding to the more demanding expectations of state legislatures, local school boards, and national accreditation agencies. As reported in the NPBEA report (Schneider, 2002), "Every educational reform report of the last decade concludes that the United States cannot have excellent schools without excellent leaders" (p.2). The task of those in administrator preparation programs has rapidly required the redesign of preparation and certification programs that develop competent leaders to guide the efforts of

creating schools to meet the growing requirements for student achievement and the accompanying accountability measures.

Glass, Bjork, and Brunner (2000) reported that the superintendency now demands a more collaborative leadership style for dealing with the growing trend toward school-based management and decision making as school districts become increasingly decentralized and local schools become more autonomous. This collaborative leadership characteristic is not only basic for those around the superintendency, but also for leaders at all school and district levels.

Theoretical Framework

Demont and Demont (1975) put forth the theory of educational accountability that the organization and the individual share common goals. The previously accepted practice of accountability was that the "greater good" of the organization compromised the goals of the individual. These authors contended that their system of accountability would be implemented when professionals in the organization would be committed to the diverse individual goals of the clients.

In putting this theory to application of the preparation of educational administrators, these programs were held accountable to meeting the demands of external accreditation agencies dealing with inputs and not outcomes. These inputs included accountability for meeting requirements of student qualifications, professor accomplishments, and organizational bookkeeping. NPBEA (2002) has now shifted to making institutions accountable for preparing graduates that demonstrate skills, knowledge and dispositions that contribute to successful administrative practice.

Changing Knowledge and Skills for Educational Leaders

Current research shows that the expectations of school leaders seem to be shifting from the traditional knowledge base to five contemporary requirements needed for successful leadership. The NPBEA writers (Schneider, 2002) based their expectations on these five specific shifts in the knowledge and skills required of future educational leaders. These included the following:

- From technical skills to interpersonal skills.
- From director to consensus guilder and motivator.
- From resource allocation to accountability for learning.
- From campus administrator to integrator of school and community services.
- From policy recipient to policy participant.

Components of Revised Educational Leadership Programs

In order for students to achieve the aforementioned knowledge and skills now required of school administrators, the following components must be included in the delivery of educational leadership programs:

- Program Standards – The program standards have incorporated the standards of the Arkansas Department of Education and the Educational Leadership Constituent Council. (See Appendix A)
- Course Syllabus/Outline – the course syllabus is the map to be followed by the instructor for each course. This document specifies the state and national standards that the students are expected to attain in that course. The instructor may alter the course methods and assessments as long as integrity of the standards is maintained. (See Appendix B)

- Significant Activities – these significant activities are used by the program to meet the ELCC standards for preparation of building and district level administrators. (See Appendix A)
- Performance Assessment for Administrators – these performance assessments are designed to judge the candidate's ability to solve "real-life" problems as found in practice of building and district level administrators. (See Appendix A)
- Program Assessment for Administrators – these are performance-based assessments aligned with the ELCC standards to judge the program's success in preparation of building and district level administrators. (See Appendix C)
- Program Outcome Measurements – this is evidence that the overall program has been effective in meeting the ELCC standards.
- Internship Requirements – the internship experience must be substantial, sustained, standards-based, conducted in real settings, planned and guided cooperatively and offers credit.

Instructional Methods

Classroom procedures have been developed that take into consideration the needs of adult learners through providing instructional methods that are centered on real-workplace problems, group problem solving, and working with diverse populations.

- Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is used to give students opportunities in solving real-life problems through the comprehensive, step-by-step procedure of problem identification, finding alternative solutions, presenting those findings in small leaderless groups, and giving practice to what happens in the real work of educational administration in schools.
- Case Methods are used to learn and practice individually-defined problem-solving

- Skill development through the study of numerous cases and the theoretical application of possible solutions to the problems identified in such cases.
- The internship is the culminating experience. At a minimum, it is a 216-hour commitment taken throughout the student's program of study. The purposes of the internship experience shall be: (a) to develop and practice administrative skills in diverse settings; (b) to provide the student with significant opportunity to synthesize and apply knowledge; (c) to provide prospective administrators with the opportunity for learning under the supervision of experienced educators, and; (d) to provide certification upon the demonstration of the principal intern's ability to meet the administrator standards. The internship is a licensure requirement established by the Arkansas Department of Education and the ELCC.
- The portfolio is the candidate's summative evaluation to be presented near the conclusion of the program of study. The portfolio is a licensure requirement established by the Arkansas Department of Education.

Individual Performance Assessment methods

- Classroom Assessments – the instructor may use the following methods to evaluate individual student performance: research papers; exhibits; simulations; exams; case studies; and observations. Classroom exhibits, case studies and simulations will be possible artifacts to be included in the candidate's portfolio.
- Assessment Rubrics – these rubrics are designed for each significant activity to objectively evaluate the student's achievement of the program standards identified for that learning activity.

- Internship – an internship experience equivalent to full-time, each candidate must complete 6-month experience. Internship team members include a school level administrator and a university mentor who shall supervise, assist, and assess the administrative intern. This may be accomplished in two semesters offering academic credit and in completion of the course significant activities that require working in diverse school and district settings. Team members are to make a minimum of three performance observations each semester and review the portfolio of the intern. Team members are expected to conduct conferences with the intern to provide information on the skill level demonstrated and make suggestions for the intern's professional growth. The summative evaluation of the internship experience from each semester will be the EDAS Candidate Profile to be completed cooperatively by the administrative and university mentors.
- A *Portfolio* is presented orally, electronically, and with hard copy at the conclusion of the course of study for all candidates seeking state licensure. The portfolio is used to ensure that students meet those licensure standards as specified in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions stipulated by state and national accrediting agencies that are reflective of the workplace. The candidate is evaluated on the quality of documented experiences and on the presentation of the material.
- The *School Leader Licensure Assessment* must be taken by all candidates seeking principal licensure and/or school district director or supervisor. The exam is recommended to be taken during or immediately following the last semester of the student's program of study. A student must attain at least a score of 158 to apply for the Arkansas Principal or Director/Supervisor License. A student not meeting this score may graduate and will have up to three years from the date of program graduation to obtain the required score.

- All candidates seeking the superintendent license must take the School Superintendent Licensure Assessment. The exam is recommended to be taken during the last semester or immediately following the student's program of study. A student must attain a passing score to apply for the Arkansas Principal License (cut score to be later determined at state level). A student not meeting this score may graduate and will have up to three years from the date of program graduation to obtain the required score.

Program Assessment Methods

- A *Follow-up Survey of Students* is administered at the conclusion of the semester in which the candidate will graduate from the EDAS program. The results of this assessment will be used for program improvement. A rating for any item on the survey of 1.0-2.5 will require the faculty and Advisory Council to review course content and instructor records to identify the problem and recommend changes to faculty to make needed corrections.
- A *Graduate Follow-up Survey of Supervisors* is administered during the fifth year of graduation from the EDAS program and will be sent to supervisors of former students that are practicing school or district administrators. A rating for any item on the survey of 1.0-2.8 will require the faculty and Advisory Council to review course content and instructor records to identify the problem and recommend changes to faculty to make needed corrections. This evaluation will include revisiting the appropriate curriculum map, the course outline and syllabus, and the instructor's lesson notes.
- A *Graduate Follow-up Survey of Students* is administered during the fifth year of graduation from the EDAS program to those former students that are practicing school or district administrators. A rating for any item on the survey of 1.0-2.8 will require the faculty and Advisory Council to review course content and instructor records to identify the problem

and recommend changes to faculty to make needed corrections. This evaluation will include revisiting the appropriate curriculum map, the course outline/syllabus, and the instructor's lesson notes.

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Author(s):	W. Keith Christy, EdD; Larry McNeal, PhD; Jo Chesser, EdD
Corporate Source:	Arkansas Association of Colleges for Teacher Ed
Publication Date:	April 10, 2003

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